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Peace without force means a yielding of the strong, not the submission of the weak. Wrongs must be righted before enforcing claims even though these claims be just. Can we yield to a nation in the wrong and yet promote world justice? This is the test of a peace without victory, of a world not coerced by force. It is not the insistence on our rights but on our neighbors' wrongs that makes for world betterment. Nations are often unruly, emotional and stubborn, but they need forgiveness more than punishment. In local affairs we may let the majority dictate, but liberty should be our guide in world decisions. Toleration is more moral than right, more luminous than truth, a sounder principle than justice and more divine than retribution. Without it no democracy can exist. Its basis is a peace that endures because it is loved. Battleships and machine guns cannot do what simpler forces do through the radiating influence of comradeship and good will.

## PAX AMERICANA

BY GEORGE W. KIRCHWEY, LL.D.,

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The League to Enforce Peace has sprung full-armed from the brain of Woodrow Wilson. While the immediate occasion of our entry into the world war is "the reckless and lawless submarine warfare" which the German government has been waging against American commerce and the lives of our citizens, its purpose is declared by the President to be

to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up amongst the really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and of action as will henceforth insure the observance of those principles.

And again, in the same noble utterance from which this declaration is taken, he says:

We shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.

Now it would be a mistake to interpret these declarations and, with them, all the other notable utterances of the address to the Congress, in a literal sense. The President is in expression distinctly a man of letters, and, as Matthew Arnold says of the Bible, "to understand that the language" employed "is fluid, passing and literary, not rigid, fixed and scientific, is the first step toward a right understanding." But it would be a greater mistake to dismiss the whole matter as "mere literature" and to assume that the war to which we were committed on the evening of April 2 has any but a historical connection with the defensive program launched on March 4. To say, as we well may, that the one is the germ of the other, does not limit the war that is, either in scope or purpose, to the war contemplated a month earlier. It is clear that the President's purpose enlarged portentously in the few weeks that intervened between the two events—not as the result of external happenings (there had been no new "overt act" of special significance; the German submarine warfare was neither better nor worse than it had been) but as the result of a new orientation of the President's mind. During that fateful month the long roll of wrongs suffered by us and by other neutral powers presented themselves no longer as individual acts of aggression, reluctantly committed under the lash of necessity, but as the unfolding of the hostile purpose of an autocratic military power waging "warfare against mankind." "Peace without victory" is now seen to be impossible. Our country must "exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the government of the German empire to terms and end the war."

To what extent this growing purpose of the President has been shared by the American people, it would be vain to inquire. It had long been held by a small but influential section of the community, the majority of the "intellectuals," the professional classes and the leading newspapers. The great mass of the population, indifferent or reluctant from the beginning, has probably remained unconvinced to the end. But the end has come and it is safe to assume that the President's purpose is today the nation's purpose and that we are in the war not merely to protect our commerce and the lives of our citizens, but also to end the war which the German government is waging on mankind and, by coöperation with the governments now at war with Germany, to bring that government to terms.

In saying this I am not unmindful of the fact that the Congress,

clearly representing the weight of public opinion of the country at large, has accepted, not willed, the war, and that only a small minority of either House put the seal of its approval on the wider purpose declared by the President. A considerable number of the members who voted for war emphatically repudiated any motive but that of vindicating American right against German aggression and a large majority gave this as their only reason for so voting. But when the war-making power has once been placed in the President's hands it is certain that its course will be determined by his purpose and not by the reserves and hesitations of those who entrusted it to him. Indeed, as every reader of history knows, wars have a way of taking their own course without much respect for the intentions of those who set them in motion. If there is anyone, in or out of Congress, who still believes that Germany's submarine warfare is today the vital issue between the two countries and that the Imperial government could still by abandoning that warfare make peace with the United States, the course of events in Washington during the past two weeks<sup>1</sup> should undeceive him. We are not waging a separate warfare against Germany. Whether, as a people, we willed it or not, we are in the war and we are in it to the end. The only peace that we can now consider is a general peace that will make the world safe for democracy. For better or for worse, Woodrow Wilson has given the United States a new world policy.

If I am correct in this interpretation of the situation, two facts of momentous significance in their bearing on our national life and well-being as well as upon the future course of world-history come into view. The first is this: that for the first time in human history a great nation has gone to war, has pledged all its power and resources, has staked its very existence for a purely ideal end. As the President has truly said, "We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of the nation can make them." I say this is an unprecedented event, and for that reason bound to be misunderstood. We may well believe that the German government was taken by surprise, when her inspired organs cry out, "Never before has a nation gone to war without cause or for such a cause."

<sup>1</sup> Written in April, 1917.

In the second place, our entry into the war "for such a cause" marks the abandonment of our traditional and cherished policy of isolation and independence of world politics. Not at the close of the Civil War, not as the result of the Spanish War, but today has the United States become a part of the international system. No American will undervalue the advantages which that policy of proud isolation has conferred on humanity, or will see it pass wholly without regret. It has given security from foreign aggression to half a world. It has quarantined us against the fatal disease of militarism. It has made possible the growth to plenitude of power and prosperity of the greatest and most pacific democracy that the world has ever seen and has thus fitted it for the greater rôle which it has now assumed. But it has been a selfish policy, not less selfish—if less mischievous and hateful—than the predatory policy of the powers from whom it has kept us aloof. It has given us peace, but it has been the peace of Cain—"Am I my brother's keeper?" We have kept out of war ourselves, but we have done nothing to keep other nations out of war. We have generally observed justice in our dealings with other nations, but we have been unperturbed and undismayed by the spectacle of injustice under which other peoples have been made to suffer. We have kept ourselves free from entangling alliances, but we have made no effort to substitute for the fatal balance of power in Europe and the Orient a true concert of nations based on mutual respect, forbearance and good-will. In those fatal days when Europe was hastening to her doom, when Belgium was meeting her unmerited fate, we raised neither hand nor voice to stay the outrage. Alike in our commercial and in our foreign policy, we have claimed the advantages, while repudiating the responsibilities, of the coöperative commonwealth of the nations. Worst of all, this policy of aloofness has bred in us a certain complacency and unadventurousness which has led us to conceive of international peace as a negative, static condition, a kind of Nirvana, to be attained by folding the hands over the navel and keeping the eyes closed in contemplation, rather than as a high constructive policy to be achieved in danger by infinite effort and sacrifice.

At this point grave questions, sharp as the spear of Ithuriel, thrust themselves upon us. Is the issue between autocracy and democracy, between civilization and barbarism so clear in the present struggle that we could not refuse to take up the gage of battle?

Is war the only way, is it the best way, for our great, pacific democracy to champion the imperilled rights of mankind and strive for a better world order? On these questions, on which the sentiment of our people is so passionately divided, I express no opinion. They belong to a past which is already beginning to seem remote, and cannot be heard in the House of the Interpreter. But the Interpreter may surely be heard to say that if war is ever justifiable it is doubly justified when waged not for selfish ends but for the common weal, and that it is unworthy of a great people to withdraw itself in monkish isolation from a wretched world struggling in the twilight of the gods toward order, peace and justice. There is something that tells us that, for nations as for individuals, when great issues are at stake, it is better to live dangerously yet fearlessly than to live safely; that in a world in which lawless violence is rewarded with power, "Right forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne," it is shameful to avoid the struggle and live at ease.

Thus far our commitment is only for the present war. The President, indeed, makes us partners in a "League of Honor," and declares that we shall fight "for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free." But may we not say that this is the language of aspiration, not a definite, political program to which we are asked to commit ourselves? What it points to is not a formal League of Nations pledged to maintain peace among themselves, such as is outlined in the Bryce plan in England or in the program of our own League to Enforce Peace, but "a partnership of opinion," "a concert of purpose and of action amongst the really free and self-governed peoples of the world." In so far as the purpose here adumbrated transcends the issues of the present war, it seems to call rather for a spiritual partnership of the democratic peoples than a league of democratic powers committed to joint action against an aggressor. To such a "league of honor" we should be glad to commit ourselves even though it should in some fateful hour again offer us the dreadful choice of war to vindicate the principles of peace and justice against selfish and autocratic power. Further than this we are not likely to go until true democracy rules the nations from the Baltic to the Golden Horn.

Limiting our view, then, to the present war and its issues, what

is the service that the high and disinterested purpose which we have avowed demands of us?

It requires, in the first place, that we shall wage the war nobly, generously and without bitterness. As the President has said, "We act without animus, not in enmity toward a people or with the desire to bring any injury or disadvantage upon them." As we are without fear, we can afford to leave the foul and corroding passion of hate to "the lesser breeds without the law" or to those who fight blindly and madly for national existence.

In the second place, as we fight only for the security of the nations against lawless aggression, our fight will be over as soon as that security has been attained, whether by crushing victory or by the voluntary submission of the enemy. We have not gone to war to serve the purposes of the Allies save in so far as those purposes are ours. It would be a kind of madness as well as a betrayal of our democracy for our government to become a full partner of the Entente Allies and bind itself not to make a separate peace. There is no danger that the President will propose or that the Senate would ratify such an arrangement.

In the third place, our government should not only withdraw from the war but should use all its influence to bring the war to a conclusion as soon as, in its opinion, a just and durable peace can be secured. We are fighting for a world-peace, not for a world-truce, and we cannot lend ourselves to terms of settlement which, because of their harsh or oppressive character, will have in them the seeds of future wars. It is clear that our purpose to bring peace and security to the world will not be achieved until Belgium, France and Serbia have been completely emancipated from foreign dominion and restored to the condition in which they were before the storm of war was let loose on them, but is anyone bold enough to assert that we should fight for the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, or to establish the Russians in Constantinople, or to place Albania under the heel of Italy, or to force a democratic régime on the Central Empires? It is not thus that the incubus of autocratic militarism that now rests upon the world can be destroyed.

In the fourth place, we should insist now, as the price of our active participation in the general war, that the Allies shall bind themselves to join with us in the creation of a true society of nations, from which no power, small or great, whether now friendly or hostile,

shall be excluded, and which shall be based on the general acceptance of the "Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Nations" adopted by the American Institute of International Law, January 6, 1916, and of the principles of peaceful adjustment and judicial settlement of international disputes, as set forth in the "Recommendations of Havana," adopted by the same body of international jurists, January 22, 1917. What may well be regarded as a minimum program on which we shall insist is:

1. The convocation of a third Hague Conference immediately after the close of the war—the conference to assume a permanent character, meeting at regular, stated periods, under general regulations having the force of international law.

2. The formation of a judicial union of the nations by a convention pledging the good faith of each of them to submit their justiciable disputes to a permanent court of the union and to submit to the findings of such court.

3. The creation of an international council of conciliation to which the nations shall bind themselves to submit such questions of a non-justiciable character as may not have been settled by negotiation.

Whether the nations shall go further and establish a League to Enforce Peace by military power either among themselves or against the insolent pretensions of aggressive powers not of their number, must, I conceive, be left to the future to determine. Personally I do not believe that the world is yet ripe for such a consummation.

And, lastly, we must wage the war for democracy and the security of peace and justice at home as well as abroad. For the enemy, the selfish spirit of autocracy that lives by force and aggression is here in our midst as well as in Berlin, Vienna and Constantinople. As Galsworthy has recently reminded us, "The Prussian junker is but a specially favored variety of a well-marked type that grows in every land. And the business of other men is to keep circumstances from being favorable to its development and ascendancy." But this statement, true as it is, is not the full measure of the danger that menaces our democracy. A latent junker sleeps in most of us, and war is the congenial climate in which he thrives and, in an evil hour, takes command over the better, the more humane and reasonable, the more democratic part of us. We enter upon the war with the loftiest aims that ever inspired a nation in arms. The spirit of nationalism which makes us a united people and therefore capable both of feeling deeply and of realizing nobly those aims, is at the same time the opportunity of the autocrat, the jingo, of all



those incapable of fighting for an ideal loftier than self-interest or national power or the glory of conquest. It is against these in our own land, in our own blood—that we must strive in order that we may preserve and bring to prevail America's unique contribution to the welfare of the world.

And here we reach the height of the great argument. I have spoken of the high spirit of disinterestedness that has carried us into the war. But that should not surprise us nor anyone, friend or enemy, that knows us. As a recent writer has said:

The truth is that the United States is the only high-minded Power left in the world. It is the only strong nation that has not entered on a career of imperial conquest, and does not want to enter on it. If the nations of Europe had entertained purposes as disinterested as those of the United States they would not now be engaged in this butchery. There is in America little of that spirit of selfish aggression which lies at the heart of militarism. Here alone exists a broad basis for "a new passionate sense of brotherhood, and a new scale of human values." We have a deep abhorrence of war for war's sake; we are not enamored of glamour or glory. We have a strong faith in the principle of self-government. We do not care to dominate alien peoples, white or colored; we do not aspire to be the Romans of tomorrow or the "masters of the world." The idealism of Americans centers in the future of America, wherein we hope to work out those principles of liberty and democracy to which we are committed. . . . This political idealism, this strain of pacifism, this abstinence from aggression and desire to be left alone to work out our own destiny, has been manifest from the birth of the republic. We have not always followed our light, but we have never been utterly faithless to it.<sup>1</sup>

When such a people goes to war the act presents itself either as a great betrayal or as a sublime fulfilment, and the nations today and history tomorrow—not by our words but by our deeds—will judge us. What will be required of us is not victory—though for victory we must mightily strive—but fidelity to the principles that have made us a name among peoples. Victory achieved through the defeat of those principles will itself be defeat, however great the material triumph.

Shall we be able to keep our ideals unimpaired in this new old-world—this world of storm and stress, of militant wrong and triumphant power—in which we have now elected to play our part? To make war only when we must and then not for selfish ends but only for the common weal? To keep and strengthen justice and democracy at home even while we strive for democracy and justice abroad? To dream no dream of empire, to see no alluring vision of

<sup>1</sup> Roland Hugins, *The Possible Peace*, New York, 1916.

power but the vision of a world made safe for democracy and secured against outrage by the united will of enfranchised peoples? I do not know. But this I know, that the days of our cloistered virtue are well lost and that we cannot refuse the great adventure even though we gain the whole world and lose our own soul. And this, too, I know, that the greatest disaster that could befall mankind is not the sum of human misery which such a war as this brings in its train, nor yet the shameful legacy of hate and fear and mistrust that it leaves behind it, but the loss to humanity of those ideals of democracy, justice and peace which our Republic has represented in an evil world. And this, too, I know, that it rests wholly with us to keep our democracy true to the line marked out for it in Washington's farewell address:

Observe good faith and justice toward all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. . . . It will be worthy of a free, enlightened and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence.